

‘Want to take up challenge of holding a credible election’: CEC

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Online Desk: Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal on Sunday said they want to take up the challenge of holding the next national election in a free and neutral manner despite the trust deficit prevailing among the public regarding elections. “There is a perception in the public sphere. There is no trust in us and in the government. Elections are not held in an impartial manner (people think). We want to take up this challenge that the next election will be free and fair and peaceful as well as transparent,” he said.

The CEC was addressing the inaugural session of a two-day training workshop arranged for Upazila Nirbahi Officers (UNO) and Upazila/Thana Election Officers ahead of the 12th parliamentary elections. Some 50 UNOs and 50 election officers participated in the workshop at the Electoral Training Institute (ETI) in the city’s Agargaon area.

Habibul Awal said they would ensure transparency in the election through their monitoring and media surveillance. He asked the participant officers to work so that there would be no trust crisis regarding the next election. “Those of us who will conduct the election –starting from the election officer to you– will have to take the responsibility properly as per the RPO,” he said.

Noting that the magnitude of complaints or controversy regarding the next election is excessive, he said, “The pressure (liability) of 2014 and 2018 (elections) has fallen on us. So, we are working tirelessly.” The CEC asked the officers to perform their duty properly during the elections. “We, from the Election Commission, will also strictly monitor,” he said. He asked them to keep in mind that there might be various arguments and debates about the election as in the past: “It happened in the past as well. If we look at the history of the 50, 60 and 70 years, it had happened in some cases of the elections held during the British era. But the magnitude was lower to some extent.”

Habibul Awal said there is a word called ‘credible,’ which remains in the laws of all countries. The international community also suggests that elections must be credible. “It would be credible only when we can ensure transparency through our performance,” he said. Talking about propaganda, the CEC said the EC will strictly curb media propaganda regarding the parliamentary elections. He said now a lot of propagandas is propagated through the media, which is called misinformation or disinformation. “We will strictly resist these things so that the elections are not affected negatively,” he added.